

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1-24 as indicated below. The following is a complete listing of claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of administering a promotional contest, comprising the steps of:

establishing a subset of a plurality of items produced by a manufacturer, wherein each item of the subset includes a winning code unique to the subset;

~~providing to a consumer an item of a~~ from the plurality of items ~~of a same type produced by a manufacturer,~~ wherein the item includes ~~an identification~~ a contest code ~~unique to a subset of the plurality of items of the same type;~~

enabling the consumer to input the ~~identification~~ contest code into a prize redemption system;

validating the ~~identification~~ contest code; and

determining whether the contest code inputted by the consumer is entitled matches the winning code thus entitling the consumer to receive a prize ~~based on the identification code inputted by the consumer~~ associated with the winning code.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the consumer inputs the ~~identification~~ contest code via the Internet or via a telephone.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the consumer inputs the ~~identification~~ contest code at a kiosk.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~consumer inputs the identification code by telephone~~ step of establishing the subset occurs before the step of enabling the consumer to input the contest code.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~determining step determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by comparing the validated identification code with stored winning numbers~~ step of establishing the subset occurs after a plurality of contest codes have been inputted into the prize redemption system by consumers, and wherein the winning code is selected from the plurality of inputted contest codes.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~determining step determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by placing the validated identification code in a virtual hat with other identification codes and drawing from the virtual hat~~ item provided to the consumer is covered by packaging material, and wherein the contest code is viewable by opening the packaging material.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~determining step determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by generating a random number using a random number generator and comparing one or more digits of the validated identification code with the random number~~ subset includes at least one item from the plurality of items.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A server operable to run a prize redemption program in which a consumer has previously been provided with an item ~~[[of]]~~ from a plurality of items ~~of a same type~~ produced by a manufacturer, wherein the item includes ~~an identification~~ a contest code, the server being operable at least to:

enable the consumer to input the ~~identification~~ contest code into a prize redemption system, ~~wherein the identification is unique to a subset of the plurality of items of the same type;~~

validate the ~~identification~~ contest code; and

determine whether the contest code inputted by the consumer is entitled matches a winning code unique to a subset of the plurality of items thus entitling the consumer to receive a prize based on the identification code inputted by the consumer associated with the winning code.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A server according to Claim 8, wherein the ~~server is on the Internet~~ subset is established before the consumer is able to input the contest code.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A server according to Claim 8, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by comparing the validated identification code with stored winning numbers~~ subset is established after a plurality of contest codes have been inputted into the prize redemption system by consumers, and wherein the winning code is selected from the plurality of inputted contest codes.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A server according to Claim 8, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by placing the validated identification code in a virtual hat with other identification codes and drawing from the virtual hat~~ item provided to the consumer is covered by packaging material, and wherein the contest code is viewable by opening the packaging material.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A server according to Claim 8, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by generating a random number using a random number generator and comparing one or more digits of the validated identification code with the random number~~ subset includes at least one item from the plurality of items.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer code for causing a server to execute a method of administering a promotional contest in which a consumer has previously been provided with an item ~~[[of]]~~ from a plurality of items ~~of a same type~~ produced by a manufacturer, wherein the item includes ~~an identification a~~ contest code, the method comprising the steps of:

enabling the consumer to input the ~~identification~~ contest code into a prize redemption system, ~~wherein the identification is unique to a subset of the plurality of items of the same type;~~

validating the ~~identification~~ contest code; and

determining whether the contest code inputted by the consumer is entitled matches a winning code unique to a subset of the plurality of items thus entitling the consumer to

receive a prize based on the ~~identification code inputted by the consumer~~ associated with the winning code.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium according to Claim 13, wherein the ~~server is on the Internet~~ subset is established before the step of enabling the consumer to input the contest code.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium according to Claim 13, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by comparing the validated identification code with stored winning numbers~~ subset is established after a plurality of contest codes have been inputted into the prize redemption system by consumers, and wherein the winning code is selected from the plurality of inputted contest codes.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium according to Claim 13, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by placing the validated identification code in a virtual hat with other identification codes and drawing from the virtual hat~~ item provided to the consumer is covered by packaging material, and wherein the contest code is viewable by opening the packaging material.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium according to Claim 13, wherein the ~~server determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to~~

~~receive a prize by generating a random number using a random number generator and comparing one or more digits of the validated identification code with the random number~~ subset includes at least one item from the plurality of items.

Claim 18 (currently amended): An apparatus for administering a promotional contest in which a consumer has been provided access to an item ~~[[of]]~~ from a plurality of items ~~of a same type~~ produced by a manufacturer, wherein the item includes ~~an identification~~ a contest code, the apparatus comprising:

means for enabling the consumer to input the ~~identification~~ contest code into a prize redemption system, ~~wherein the identification is unique to a subset of the plurality of items of the same type;~~

means for validating the ~~identification~~ contest code; and

means for determining whether the contest code inputted by the consumer is entitled matches a winning code unique to a subset of the plurality of items thus entitling the consumer to receive a prize based on the identification code inputted by the consumer associated with the winning code.

Claim 19 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the consumer inputs the ~~identification~~ contest code via the Internet or via a telephone.

Claim 20 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the consumer inputs the ~~identification~~ contest code at a kiosk.

Claim 21 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the ~~consumer inputs the identification code by telephone~~ subset is established before the consumer is able to input the contest code.

Claim 22 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the ~~determining means determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by comparing the validated identification code with stored winning numbers~~ subset is established after a plurality of contest codes have been inputted into the prize redemption system by consumers, and wherein the winning code is selected from the plurality of inputted contest codes.

Claim 23 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the ~~determining means determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by placing the validated code in a virtual hat with other codes and drawing from the virtual hat~~ item provided to the consumer is covered by packaging material, and wherein the contest code is viewable by opening the packaging material.

Claim 24 (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the ~~determining means determines whether the identification code entitles the consumer to receive a prize by generating a random number using a random number generator and comparing one or more digits of the validated identification code with the random number~~ subset includes at least one item from the plurality of items.